



## HotelPlanner Portal Instructions

This is not intended to be all-inclusive manual for using the portal, as just a few highlights are noted here. It is important that you read the advisements on the Reservation Form **VERY CAREFULLY**, as it contains important information concerning cancellation policies, refund & nonrefundable conditions and the amount your credit card will be charged at the time of booking.

Waivers, exceptions and concessions will not be granted, for concerns that are addressed in written portal advisements. You will have to acknowledge that you have read and understand the cancellation policy and payment condition, before the system will allow you to complete the transaction. Please do not click through these advisements, without reading and understanding thoroughly, as your financial consequences can be substantial.

For budgetary compliance and audit purposes, be sure to select your appropriate agency affiliation, from the two drop-down boxes for individual bookings and for group bookings, as reporting is pulled and audited by individual agencies.

## INDIVIDUAL BOOKINGS INSTRUCTIONS

There are two types of rates available on the portal – Negotiated & Transient Rates.

### TRANSIENT RATES

- These rates are displayed after the negotiated rates and do NOT have an orange banner.
- While the same hotel may also offer a negotiated rate, transient rates do not fall under the same conditions as the negotiated rates.
- Request a search for **one (1) room at a time**, as some hotels may have a limited number of rooms at a particular transient rate. Once you have determined a specific transient rate to be acceptable, you may increase the number of rooms in your search and see if the transient rate is still available for the increased number of rooms. If available, you may book multiple transient rate rooms in one booking.
- These rates can be lower or higher than negotiated rates, subject to the season and city-wide events.
- Cancellation policies are generally very restrictive and should be read and understood thoroughly.
- Transient rates are generally pre-paid, meaning that your credit card will be charged for the full amount of your reservation, at the time you book the reservation on the portal.
- You will receive a confirmation receipt and email, when your online transaction is complete. **Please retain this receipt, for reimbursement purposes.**
- When you arrive at the hotel, the hotel will not request payment for your room charges, as you will have already fully paid for your room charge when you booked your reservation on the HotelPlanner portal. **Likewise, it will not be necessary to present a tax exemption certificate to the hotel, as your online transaction did not include taxes.**
- Expect your credit card statement to reflect or the hotel to welcome you as valued HotelPlanner client, Expedia, Hotels.com, or a Book a Bed, etc. client. As HotelPlanner works in partnership with over 30 different suppliers to be able to offer a variety of rate options to the State of Louisiana.
- Upon check out, the hotel will **NOT** provide a receipt that displays room charges, as your room charges were paid to HotelPlanner. You may request the hotel to provide a statement that shows your check in dates, check out dates and itemized incidental charges (room service, parking, etc.). You will also receive a receipt within 24-48 hours after checkout, confirming your dates of stay, from HotelPlanner. Consequently, you will receive three receipts – (1) the initial confirmation receipt, noting your room charge, received at the time of booking, (2) a hotel receipt noting your dates of stay and itemized incidentals ONLY, and (3) a post-trip receipt from HotelPlanner noting your room charge and dates of stay. You should retain all three receipts and consult your agency to confirm which receipt(s) are required for reimbursement purposes.



## NEGOTIATED RATES

- These rates are displayed first and are vividly noted by the bright orange banner that reads, “This hotel rate meets PPM49 guidelines for single occupancy”.
- These rates have been specially negotiated with hotels that want to foster a relationship with the State of Louisiana.
- Request a search for **one (1) room at a time**, as some hotels may have a very limited number of rooms allocated at the negotiated rate, on a daily basis. You will need to make separate bookings for each negotiated rate room. Consequently, the system will not produce negotiated rate hotel option results, if a search is requested for more than 1 room.
- Your credit card will not be charged until your arrival at the hotel or the cancellation deadline has passed.
- You will need to present a credit card or cash deposit, for incidentals, upon check in to the hotel and subject to the individual hotel’s policy.
- Upon check in, to qualify for the state rate and to be exempt from taxes, the hotel reserves the right to require you to present a completed hotel tax exemption form and a state ID.
- Upon check-out, the hotel will provide a receipt that lists your hotel room charges, as well as incidentals.

After you have selected your preferred hotel and rate type:

- Select your appropriate agency. Also select your sub-agency, if applicable.
- Directly beneath the agency drop-downs you can choose to pay for the reservation with your credit card or choose to have the reservation sent to your agency administrator to be purchased via an agency credit card or allocated to a direct bill account, if a direct bill account is established for the designated hotel. **(NOTE:** Please check with your agency administrator to determine if they have elected to participate in the agency administrator payment component of the portal. Agency administrators may contact me, to quickly establish the payment component, as it is a very simple process. If the agency administrator payment component hasn’t been established, your credit card is needed to complete the reservation).
- If you choose to use your credit card, you will complete the credit card payment information and your reservation will be confirmed.
- If you choose to send the reservation to your agency administrator, the agency administrator will complete your reservation or reject it. Please know that rates are not guaranteed and rooms are not held until the reservation is actually purchased. You will be notified by email from your agency administrator that the reservation has been confirmed or rejected.

## GROUP BOOKINGS INSTRUCTIONS

The system is extremely user-friendly for booking groups. You no longer have to call a list of hotels, nor receive phone calls from hotels that are not under consideration.

1. Begin by clicking <http://louisiana.hotelplanner.com> or by clicking the **HotelPlanner logo**, displayed on the Office of State Travel’s home page.
2. On the portal’s HOME PAGE, input the destination city, check-in & check-out dates and number of rooms (must be 9+ for a group) and click “Continue”. NOTE: Once the **Meeting Quotation Request** page displays, you make decrease your rooms needed to a minimum of 5.)
3. Select your agency affiliation.
4. Confirm the number of rooms needed. There is NO maximum, but you may decrease it to a minimum of 5 rooms.
5. Select if singles or doubles are required
6. Select GOVERNMENT as the group type.
7. Select the star rating you will consider.



8. Input the maximum rate you will consider.
9. Select if meeting space is required or not. If a meeting room is required, complete the pop-up screen. You may add as many meeting rooms, as needed.
10. Confirm your destination city and dates of travel.
11. **Additional Requests or Comments; 1<sup>st</sup> box** - Do NOT list a "specific" hotel that you are considering. However, if there is a specific area you'd like to consider, you may indicate it here.
12. **Additional Requests or Comments; 2<sup>nd</sup> box** – Here you may list additional needs, such as complimentary breakfast, complimentary parking, meals, rooms with a kitchen, inside corridors, etc. Expect hotels that cannot offer your requests to still respond to your lead, as that is a part of the negotiating process.
13. Provide your name and telephone number.
14. Provide your email address and a password. You will enter this email and password on the HOME PAGE, when you return to the system to view hotel bid responses.
15. Click "Send My Request".

Your lead is now being sent to hotels in your destination city. It is important to know that:

- Hotels do not receive your identity or contact information, so you will not receive hotel phone calls.
- Hotels will bid on your lead, by placing a rate in the system. You will receive an email each time a bid is received that meets your maximum budget, along with a link that will connect you to your group request. You may also log into the system, from the HOME PAGE to view your hotel bid responses.

#### **Reviewing Hotel Group Bid Responses:**

16. Begin by clicking <http://louisiana.hotelplanner.com> or by clicking the **HotelPlanner logo**, displayed on the Office of State Travel's home page.
17. On the portal's HOME PAGE, click "Groups Sign In", located directly beneath the top blue banner.
18. Input your email address and your password and click "Sign In".
19. You will see a list of all of the group requests you've submitted. Click "View Request" on the left side, of the group request you'd like to review.
20. You are now able to review the your group specs at the top of the page, the hotel bid responses in the middle of the page and the hotels that do not have availability for your dates or for the maximum rate you have indicated, at the bottom of the page.
21. Directly below your group specs, you will see a sorting box. You can sort the hotels by a zip code, a distance to a popular landmark or attraction, or a specific address.
22. As you review the hotel bid responses, you may click on the hotel's name to view hotel provided information about the property, view photos, a map of the hotel's location, nearby attractions, Trip Advisor comments and hotel amenities.
23. If there is a particular hotel that has not responded with a bid response or has not responded as "not available" and you'd like to receive a bid response, **please send me an email.**
24. Below the sorting box, on the left side, you will see a downward pointing arrow underneath "COMPARE BIDS" in green. In the arrow's column, you can click on each hotel that is under consideration. Then click on the green "COMPARE BIDS". You can view hotels in a map & table or in an excel spreadsheet.
25. Once you have narrowed your list of hotels for consideration, you can reveal your identity and retrieve the hotel person's contact information. Click "Contact Hotel", located in the column to the left, for each hotel under consideration. This will give you the contact information for the particular sales person that placed the bid, as hotels generally have several sales people. Feel free to call the sales person, letting them know that you are responding to a bid they placed through HOTELPLANNER. The hotels will be happy to address your concerns and move forward to an executed contract.



26. Click "Decline" for each hotel that is not a viable option. When the decline page displays, you may advise the hotel that you would reconsider a lower rate. At the bottom, be sure to "check" the box "**I'd like to receive an adjusted new offer from this hotel**". You may also list other reasons that you are declining the bid, as applicable.

**For reporting and audit compliance purposes, if you increase/decrease the number of rooms utilized, please send me a quick email, so that I can adjust your reporting.**

Please feel free to reach out to me and we will work through any challenge together.

Have a wonderful day and safe travels!

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